

Amendments to the Drawings:

Two new sheets of drawings are attached which include new FIGS. 20A-C. These figures were added to show the sine-wave shape, sawtooth shape and square-wave shape of the electrodes, as set forth in the specification and recited in claims 9 and 21.

Attachment: Two New Sheets

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 11, 17 and 21 have been amended by this Response. Claims 12, 13, 15, 16 and 18-20 have been cancelled. Claims 17 and 21 have been amended for readability. Claim 11 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 12, such that claim 11 now constitutes claim 12 written in independent form. Claims 1-11, 14, 17 and 21-36 are currently pending in this application, and are at issue herein.

Amendments to Drawings/Specification

The Office Action objects to the drawings as not showing every feature of the invention specified in the claims. In response, Applicants are submitting the attached new sheet of drawings which included new FIGS. 20A-C. These figures were added to show the sine-wave shape (FIG. 20A), sawtooth shape (FIG. 20B) and square-wave shape (FIG. 20C) of the electrodes, as set forth in the specification and recited in claims 9 and 21.

Additionally, Applicants have amended the specification to correspond with the new figures being added. Applicants believe the objections to the drawings have been overcome, and respectfully request withdrawal thereof.

Allowed Claims

Claims 22-36 have been indicated as allowed. Applicants thank the Examiner for this notification.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has objected to claims 12, 15 and 18 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but has indicated that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, Applicants have rewritten claim 12 in independent form. Specifically, claim 11 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 12. Claims 12, 13, 15, 16 and 18-20 have been cancelled as redundant. Accordingly, amended independent claim 11, and claims 17 and 21 dependant therefrom, are submitted to be allowable for reasons of record. The rejection of claims 11, 13-14, 16 and 20-21 as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,747,407 to Saito et al., and the rejection of claims 17 and 19 as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,798,144 to Mori et al., have been rendered moot.

§§ 102 and 103 Claim Rejections - Mori

Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-10 stand rejected under § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,798,144 to Mori et al. ("Mori"). Claims 2 and 8 stand rejected under § 103(a) as obvious over Mori in view of the admitted prior art shown in Figs. 1 and 2 of the present application.

Applicants respectfully traverse the claim rejections for at least the following reasons.

Independent claim 1, as amended, recites, *inter alia*:

- a front panel, wherein radiated visual light is transmitted outside the flat lamp through the front panel;
- a rear panel, which is separated from the front panel by a predetermined distance and hermetically sealed to the front panel; and
- a plurality of electrode groups formed in the rear panel, each electrode group comprising at least three electrodes.

Mori includes no disclosure or suggestion of the above-identified limitations.

In the Office Action, Mori is cited as teaching a front glass panel (2), a rear glass panel (1), and a plurality of electrode groups (X) formed in the rear glass panel (1). Applicants respectfully submit that the Office Action misapplied Mori to the pending claims.

Mori discloses a plasma discharge display device having a first substrate (1) and a second substrate (2) separated from one another. However, Mori discloses that the luminous display is observed from the first substrate (1) side, such that the first substrate (1) is formed of a transparent glass substrate for transmitting the display light therethrough. (Mori, col. 19, lns. 15-18). Thus, while the Office Action equates the Mori substrate (1) with the rear glass panel, Applicants respectfully submit the Mori substrate (1) more appropriately is analogous to the recited front panel, as it is from that side that the light is transmitted and displayed. See Column 23, lines 46-50, for example. That said, the second substrate (2) of Mori must then correspond with the recited rear panel in order for the underlying logic of the rejection to apply.

Thus, when Mori is consistently considered, the plurality of electrode groups (X) are disclosed by Mori as being formed in the front panel (1) of Mori, and not in the rear panel of Mori as the Office Action suggests. This is clear from Fig. 14 of Mori. In contrast, the plurality of electrode groups are recited in amended claim 1 as being formed in the rear panel, with each electrode group comprising three electrodes. Mori includes no suggestion of forming the recited electrode groups in a rear panel, as recited in independent claim 1. Stated differently, Mori does not disclose the combination of features found in claim 1.

While a plurality of address electrodes (Y) are illustrated in Mori as being formed in the rear substrate (2), there is no disclosure or suggestion in Mori of forming any electrode groups comprising at least three electrodes in the rear substrate (2). Thus, Mori does not teach each and every element of the claimed invention. Accordingly, amended claim 1 is believed allowable over the prior art of record. Additionally, since Mori is directed toward a plasma discharge display device where the side at which light is output important, claim 1 would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art based on the teachings of Mori. Mori teaches forming electrode groups in the panel where light is observed from the outside. There is no disclosure or suggestion in Mori of forming such electrode groups in a rear panel from which light is not transmitted.

Dependent claims 2-10 depend cognately from independent claim 1, and add features which further remove the present invention from the prior art. Given at least the distinctions identified above, the dependent claims are believed allowable over the prior art and a separate discussion of the dependent claims will not be belabored for the sake of brevity.


Conclusion

Applicants invention is a novel flat lamp for use as a back light unit for displays, *e.g.*, a liquid crystal display, which includes structural features not found in the prior art. None of the cited art, taken alone or in combination, teaches or suggests Applicants' claimed invention. Accordingly, for at least the above-identified reasons, Applicants submit that claims 1-11, 14, 17 and 21 are allowable over the prior art. Claims 22-36 have been allowed. Early notification of allowance of all claims is respectfully requested.

It is believed that this Response requires a one-month extension. Accordingly, a petition for a one-month extension of time and a check for \$120.00 to cover the extension fee are submitted herewith. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any underpayment and credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-4553.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: 9-2-2005


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